

Elena Tsuxton, the founder and Chairperson for the HSOP, commented that the "program is absolutely thrilled to be receiving the President's Service Award." She saw it as a "validation of our efforts that we are definitely meeting a critical need in our community and state. If we can help one more Hispanic student to finish school and go out to college, we will have met the HSOP program vision."

The President's Service Awards were created as the President's Volunteer Action Award in 1982 to honor outstanding individuals and organizations engaged in volunteer service directed at solving critical social problems while calling public attention to the contributions made by the nation's 93 million volunteers. In 1999, more than 3,500 nominations were submitted and reviewed in four activity areas: human needs, environmental needs, educational improvement, and public safety. A select panel of distinguished Americans judged the nominations based on achievement, meeting community needs innovation and mobilizing others to serve.

Mr. President, I congratulate this Idaho volunteer program for receiving this well deserved honor and thank them for their service to Idaho and its youth.●

#### UNITED HEALTHCARE

● Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I rise to express my support and appreciation regarding actions taken at United Healthcare that clearly demonstrate to me that proposed congressional action in the area referred to as "patient's rights" can be best handled by the marketplace.

Yesterday, United Healthcare announced they will be changing the way they manage care in their health plans by giving physicians the final say in determining what course of treatment their patients will receive. In citing the reasons for the change of policy, United noted the savings resulting from their \$100 million review process do not justify continuing it.

United Healthcare is the second-largest health insurer in the nation and I believe their actions signal an industrywide realization that their review process may be saving them less than they thought.

According to United Healthcare, 99 percent of their claims are approved despite an exhaustive review process. While this raises the question of exactly why the federal government needs to disrupt the entire health system by getting involved with one percent of health care claims, it also demonstrates our current private-sector health care providers must respond to consumer concerns or lose their customers to health providers that do.

Of course, United Healthcare will still have some review process and require physicians to notify them when a patient needs an expensive procedure or requires hospitalization. This is

clear in all of our interests to ensure the appropriate treatments are considered. We should trust our physicians, but with the rapid advancements made in health care every day it is reasonable for us to have a team of experts review all the latest treatments, devices and pharmaceuticals. Clearly, this is an area where health plans are, and should be assisting physicians and ensuring quality health services are offered appropriately in their facilities.

By changing their review process, United Healthcare will reduce its medical monitoring staff by 20 percent and re-focus the remaining staff on Care Coordination efforts.

This saves money for the plan which in turn saves money for consumers through lower premiums. I believe it is a significant step in the right direction, proving once again, that market forces and demands are productive and responsive. Government solutions usually distort market forces and end up with poorer services at higher costs.

I should like to be clear about my support for the Patient's Bill of Rights Plus legislation I cosponsored and voted for—it is still needed because it addresses other important issues. What this change of practice announced by United Health does signal is the potential for us to reach a reasonable conclusion to negotiations underway between the House-passed Patient's Bill of Rights and the Senate-passed Patient's Bill of Rights Plus, particularly on the contentious issue of health plan liability.

Mr. President, it is hard to overstate the importance of this announcement from United Healthcare and I felt it was imperative someone in Congress acknowledged private market forces for positive change far outweigh a government imposed remedy.●

#### TRIBUTE TO SENATOR JOHN CHAFEE'S STAFF

● Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, with all of the tributes to Senator John Chafee over the last few weeks I think it is important that we do not forget his talented and dedicated staff. In particular I would like to thank his staff on the Environment and Public Works Committee. He assembled a very professional team, well respected not only on both sides of the aisle but also within the larger environmental professional community.

I call special attention to Senator Chafee's staff director, Jimmie Powell. Jimmie has served Congress over the last 20 years in various positions, and has worked on every major environmental statute over the last 20 years. Earlier this year, the National Journal called him a "low key aide whose political insights and institutional memory are sought out by industry lobbyists." This is an understatement. There is no Senate staffer, or House staffer, with more environmental experience and political know-how than Jimmie Powell.

I believe that Jimmie served his boss, Chairman Chafee well. I did not always

agree with the positions that Senator Chafee took, but Jimmie always did an excellent job in representing his boss's interests. I am not sure what position Jimmie Powell will take next, but I am confident that he will approach any new challenge with the same integrity and honor he exhibited as a Senate staffer.●

#### PUBLIC SERVICE OF JIMMIE POWELL

● Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to a member of our Senate family who has dedicated himself for many years to serving the Senate and the Committee on Environment and Public Works—Jimmie Powell.

I know that our distinguished former chairman, Senator Chafee, would not have let pass the opportunity for the Senate to recognize Jimmie Powell's years of service to the Committee and his contributions to the protection of our environment.

Now, as he prepares to open a new chapter in his professional career and leave the Senate after some twenty years of service, I want to extend my appreciation and thanks to Jimmie on behalf of myself and the other Republican members of the Committee—Chairman SMITH, and Senators INHOFE, THOMAS, BOND, VOINOVICH, CRAPO, BENNETT, and HUTCHISON. The hallmark of his career has been his command of the issues, hard work and dedication to protecting public health and our environment.

As the staff director for the chairman and the Republican members of the committee, I know that Senator Chafee respected Jimmie and was grateful for his counsel and the service he provided. To staff, and to some members, Jimmie was an adversary, as well as a motivator and educator.

He began his Senate career with former Senator David Durenberger in 1978, serving as his staff director of the Government Affairs Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations and later as legislative director. In 1985, Jimmie began his long service as a professional staff member and staff director for the Committee on Environment and Public Works. While his service primarily focused on legislative priorities for Senator Durenberger, Chairman Stafford and Chairman Chafee, he worked tirelessly for all Republican members of the Committee.

When one examines the environmental laws enacted in the past 20 years, those of us on the committee know of Jimmie's leadership and accomplishments. This lengthy list includes the Leaking Underground Storage Tank program as part of the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments of 1984, Superfund, the 1987 Clean Water Act with groundwater protections and nonpoint source programs, the 1986 and the 1996 Safe Drinking Water Act, the 1990 Clean Air Act amendments, particularly provisions on air toxics and alternative fuels, the 1991 Intermodal